

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A fuel cell system comprising:
 - at least one cathode section having an inlet and an outlet;
 - at least two anode sections each having an inlet and an outlet;
 - wherein said at least one cathode section and said at least two anode sections are operable to convert an oxidant-containing cathode reactant and a hydrogen-containing anode reactant into electricity, a cathode effluent and an anode effluent;
 - a first flow path operable to supply a first anode reactant feed stream to an inlet of a first anode section of said at least two anode sections, said first anode reactant feed stream being the only anode reactant feed stream flowing into said first anode section through said first inlet;
 - a second flow path distinct and separate from said first flow path and operable to supply a second anode reactant feed stream distinct and separate from said first anode reactant feed stream to an inlet of a second anode section of said at least two anode sections, said second anode reactant feed stream being the only anode reactant feed stream flowing into said second anode section through said second inlet;
 - a first device in said first flow path operable to modulate an entire flow of said first anode reactant feed stream through said first flow path;

a second device in said second flow path operable to modulate an entire flow of said second anode reactant feed stream through said second flow path;

a third flow path connecting an outlet of said first anode section to an outlet of said second anode section without passing through an anode section, said third flow path thereby providing flow communication between said first and second anode sections through said outlets; and

a valve communicating with said third flow path and operable to modulate venting of anode effluent from said third flow path, said valve not impeding flow communication between said outlets of said first and second anode sections through said third flow path regardless of an operational state of said valve.

2. (currently amended) A fuel cell system comprising:

- at least one cathode section having an inlet and an outlet;
- at least two anode sections each having an inlet and an outlet;
- wherein said at least one cathode section and said at least two anode sections are operable to convert an oxidant-containing cathode reactant and a hydrogen-containing anode reactant into electricity, a cathode effluent and an anode effluent;
- a first flow path operable to supply a first anode reactant feed stream to an inlet of a first anode section of said at least two anode sections;
- a second flow path operable to supply a second anode reactant feed stream to an inlet of a second anode section of said at least two anode sections;
- a first device in said first flow path operable to modulate flow through said first flow path;
- a second device in said second flow path operable to modulate flow through said second flow path;
- a third flow path connecting an outlet of said first anode section to an outlet of said second anode section without passing through an anode section, said third flow path thereby providing flow communication between said first and second anode sections through said outlets;
- a valve communicating with said third flow path and operable to modulate venting of anode effluent from said third flow path;

a fourth flow path operable to supply a third anode reactant feed stream to said third flow path without said third anode reactant feed stream flowing through an anode section prior to reaching said third flow path; and

a third device in said fourth flow path operable to modulate flow through said fourth flow path.

3. (previously presented) The system of claim 2, wherein said third device is a proportional valve that regulates a quantity of said third anode feed stream flowing to said third flow path.

4. (previously presented) The system of claim 2, wherein said third device is operable to block flow through said fourth flow path.

5. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said first and second devices are proportional valves that regulate a quantity of said anode feed streams flowing to said respective first and second anode sections.

6. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said first and second devices are each operable to block flow through said respective first and second flow paths.

7. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said valve is a proportional valve that regulates a quantity of anode effluent vented from said third flow path.

8. (previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein said valve is operable to block venting of anode effluent from said third flow path.

9. (currently amended) The system of claim 1, wherein said at least one cathode section is a cathode portion of a single fuel cell stack and said at least two anode sections are an anode portion of said single fuel cell stack.

10. (original) The system of claim 1, wherein said first anode section is an anode portion of a first fuel cell stack and said second anode section is an anode portion of a second fuel cell stack.

11-33. (cancelled)

34. (previously presented) The fuel cell system of claim 2, wherein said valve does not impede flow communication between said outlets of said first and second anode sections through said third flow path regardless of an operational state of said valve.